

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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FUND, URBAN LEAGUE
TOUR REFUGEE CENTERS

NEW YORK -- A five-city nationwide tour by officials of the National Urban League and Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief may have provided the impetus for new thrusts in refugee ministries.

The ten-day tour took the group into five Episcopal Dioceses: Olympia, Los Angeles, Dallas and Miami which are heavily involved in refugee ministries; and Washington from which most migration and urban policies emanate. In addition to the Episcopal Church and Urban League members, the group contained members of the American Methodist Episcopal, American Methodist Episcopal Zion and Christian Methodist Episcopal Churches and Church World Service staff.

The trip was arranged by the Fund through Mrs. Robert M. Dawson, assistant director for migration affairs and a member of the National Urban League, in an effort to acquaint leaders of the black community with the scope of refugee issues in the United States.

The itinerary was designed to show the range of the work -- from the multifaceted Garden Grove, Calif., center, through language classes in Seattle, through successful resettlements in Dallas and the largely thriving refugee community that is transforming parts of Miami, and on to the squalor of federally-supervised camps -- and to allow ample time for League and Church officials to test assumptions, check information and share in a number of formal and informal exchanges with local secular, governmental and civic groups.

On the last leg of the trip, Washington, tour members were able to spend time with Immigration, State Department, Health and Human Services officers and Church and voluntary agencies to discuss attitudes, need and potential solutions.

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As a result of the trip, Urban League and Episcopal Church authorities are holding sessions during September to discuss future sharing both directly and through ecumenical channels and to maintain communication through committee memberships, invitations and by less formal means.

In addition to Mrs. Dawson, members of the tour consisted of Fund director the Rev. Samir J. Habiby, two League vice-presidents, Clarence Wood and Maudine Cooper, the League director for Social Welfare, Mrs. Dean Londa and Mr. Horace W. Morris, director of the Urban League of New York. In addition, regional League officers and Fund officials and other Church leaders shared parts of the journey.

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